

Tim Takes a Step

One Monday after school, Tim finally did what he'd wanted to do for a long time. He grabbed his backpack and, instead of heading home, crossed the parking lot between the school and the church. He slowly walked in the side door of the church and headed to Pastor's office.

He hoped Pastor was in. But a part of him hoped Pastor wasn't in. *Why was this so hard?* he wondered. *Why did he feel so nervous?*

He took a deep breath and lifted his hand to knock on the door. Before he made a sound, though, the door suddenly opened!

"Oh, hi, Tim!" said Pastor Paulsen. "I didn't know you were standing out here."

All right, don't back out now, Tim thought to himself.

Then he said, "Pastor, I was wondering if I could talk to you for a minute." Tim kept his eyes on Pastor's shoes. "See, I've been thinking about becoming, um, becoming a pastor. Like you."

There. He'd said it. He looked up shyly at Pastor Paulsen.

"Wow!" Pastor said. "You know, the funny thing is, I've kind of had my eye on you for a while now, and I've been thinking the same thing. I think you'd be a good pastor."

"You do?!" Tim couldn't believe his ears.

Pastor laughed. "Yeah! I do!"

Suddenly Tim didn't feel nervous anymore. It was time to start asking his questions. "Well, I guess I wonder how you got to be a pastor. I mean, I know you went to school for it and everything, but how did you know that's what you wanted to be?"

Pastor put his hands in his pockets and leaned against the doorframe. "Well, lots of people encouraged me along the way," he said. "My parents, my pastor, my teachers. But, ultimately, God led me to be a pastor. It's God who calls people into the ministry."

Tim nodded.

"Listen, Pastor said, "I'm just on my way over to the hospital to visit Mrs. Birch. You want to come along? We can talk more about this on the way."

Ephesians 4:11: So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the _____ and _____.

Discussion

1. Tim was a little nervous about talking to Pastor Paulsen. Why should he not have been? *Tim's thoughts of becoming a pastor were good thoughts, and Pastor Paulsen was just the person to talk to. He could encourage Tim and answer Tim's questions.*
2. Who did Pastor Paulsen say encouraged him to be a pastor? *His parents, his pastor, his teachers.*
3. Let's look up Ephesians 4:11. What two words are missing there? *Pastors, teachers.* So who ultimately is responsible for Pastor Paulsen becoming a pastor? *God is. Pastors and teachers are God's gifts to the church.*
4. If you've ever thought about becoming a pastor or teacher, whom could you talk to? *Your parents, grandparents, siblings, or other relatives. Your pastors and teachers.*
5. Could you talk to your friends about it too? *Absolutely! Good Christian friends would also encourage you to pursue that calling.*
6. Have you ever mentioned to someone that you were thinking about becoming a pastor or teacher? What did that person say? *Lead the students to share their personal experiences with the class. Share an experience of your own too!*

Activity – Your Questions, Please: Use this as a whole-class activity, or put students into small groups to work through it first and then come together as a class. Lead the students to see that it's okay to ask questions and express concerns. That's the only way to get answers!

To Maggie: Yes, a certain level of intelligence is necessary. Teachers have to know the subjects that they teach. But even more important are a love for children, an ability to communicate well, and a willingness to serve Jesus. It's true that not everyone can be a teacher, but it's also true that good grades aren't the most important thing.

To Jordan: If you ask your pastors, they may tell you that they actually do just fine financially. Churches take care of their called workers! And that old saying is true: "Money can't buy happiness." The blessings of being a called servant of Jesus bring far more joy than a hefty bank account.

To Ty: That's a natural feeling for many teenagers. But as you grow up, and as you train for the public ministry, your faith and your confidence grow stronger. God empowers you to talk about him!

To Izzie: You should remember that your parents probably know you pretty well. But it's not wrong to have a difference of opinion about your future career. (It might be wrong, though, to say no to a career simply because you want to do the opposite of what your parents want.) Here's the important thing: No matter what career/vocation you choose, you can share God's love and be of service to people.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord Jesus, for calling people to be pastors and teachers who preach and teach your Word. Please help us to listen to your Word and to think about whether we might become pastors and teachers in your church. Amen.

Optional Hymn: 745:1,4 Hark, the Voice of Jesus Crying